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FM USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA
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INFO RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0237
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0010

C O N F I D E N T I A L UNVIE VIENNA 000100

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2023

TAGS: PREL SNAR KCRM

SUBJECT: ISRAEL STILL CONSIDERING UNODC MAJOR DONOR STATUS,
SEEKING SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION IN CONSULTATIVE GROUPS

REF: A. UNVIE VIENNA 00652

1B. SECSTATE 07017

Classified By: Ambassador Gregory L. Schulte for reasons 1.4 (c) and (e)
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11. (C) Summary. At a meeting on March 11, DCM and MsnOff met with Israeli Anti-Drug Authority Deputy Director Eitan Gorni and Israeli MFA Director of the International Organizations Department Tibor Shalev-Shlosser to discuss Israeli participation in the CND and UNODC as well as consultative groups for those organizations. Shalev-Shlosser noted that Israel seeks a role in the WEOG at the CND and UNODC and asked for U.S. support at both fora. He also said that UNODC Executive Director Costa's visit to meet with Israeli and Palestinian authorities was delayed until May because of the Gaza conflict. Israel sought additional information on the utility of the Major Donors group since Jerusalem is still considering whether to boost its funding to UNODC, a decision made more difficult by the world economic slowdown given the significant increase this would be from Israel's current contribution. End Summary.

12. C) At a meeting on March 11, DCM and MsnOff met with Israeli Anti-Drug Authority Deputy Director Eitan Gorni and Israeli MFA Director of the International Organizations Department Tibor Shalev-Shlosser to discuss Israeli participation in the CND and UNODC as well as consultative groups for those organizations. Shalev-Shlosser said that Israel sought greater participation in the WEOG at both the CND and UNODC and was not satisfied with the difficulties Israel has had in becoming a regular part of these fora. He noted that the EU had given its consent for Israeli participation in the Western group at the CND, but that "nothing really happened practically." The Israeli DCM said that Israel had become a part of the forum because the Turkish WEOG President had sent a letter that received no response from the other members of the group. She took this as a "positive" response and allowed Israeli participation. Israel is hoping for a similar "practical approach" to its participation at the WEOG in Vienna and that they will be invited to any meetings or consultations related to the group. However, they were disheartened by a response by the French in Vienna that they should keep their status quiet and not push for formal inclusion. The DCM assured Israel that the U.S. still supports Israeli participation in the WEOG and described our extensive efforts to encourage Israel's inclusion in the WEOG at the IAEA. The group is much less active, and less relevant, in other Vienna multilateral fora.

13. (C) Shalev-Shlosser also noted that Israel was still considering participation in the Major Donor's group (ref A), adding that the MFA DG's office had requested that his office deliver a recommendation on becoming a major donor, but that he needed to be able to justify the significant financial increase to his government given current economic conditions. He felt that the financial outlay was possible if the right

arguments were made and asked how Israel would benefit from increasing its contribution. A conversation with the Cairo-based UNODC representative regarding Russia's exclusion from the Major Donor's group had worried Israel that even with an increased contribution, Israel may not have additional influence because meetings are often ad hoc. The DCM reviewed ref B guidance regarding U.S. support for Israel's increased involvement in UNODC. He also noted the importance of the Major Donor's group in a donor-driven organization like UNODC and discussed Executive Director Costa's personal focus on issues of international importance, which is in part colored by the opinions of major donors.

¶14. (C) Looking forward to the planned visit of Costa to Israel in May, Shalev-Shlosser noted that Costa is focused on relations between Israel and the Palestinians. Although this is important to Israel, Jerusalem has more global concerns and wants to contribute more to global efforts to combat drugs and crime in Europe, the Mediterranean, and beyond. Gorni recalled Israel's role in seizing containers of cocaine traveling from South America to Europe to highlight Israel's ability to play a more prominent role.

¶15. (C) Shalev-Shlosser asked for continued U.S. input on the question of Israel's involvement in UNODC and, in particular, hoped for greater assurance from Washington that the USG would outwardly support Israel if it decided to become a Major Donor. He understood that USG views would have an important impact on Israel's consideration of support for the UNODC General Purpose Fund and reiterated that he would welcome U.S. arguments to favor a greater role in the organization. In addition, he noted his favorable impression of ED Costa's presentation at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

¶16. (C) DCM noted that it was likely that Iran would become the next chair of the CND in order to gauge Israeli opinion. The Israeli officials seemed unfazed by the possibility and the Israeli DCM shared her opinion that Iranian Ambassador Soltanieh is professional and "won't play." Gorni also noted that he thought Iran was doing a good job in combating the drug problem, both in its counternarcotics efforts and its prevention programs.

SCHULTE